

What is claimed is

1. A use of pinitol or chiroinositol for protecting the liver in a mammal.
2. The use of claim 1, wherein pinitol or chiroinositol enhances superoxide dismutase (SOD) activity.
3. The use of claim 1, wherein pinitol or chiroinositol increases the glutathione level in the liver.
4. The use of claim 1, wherein the mammal is human.
5. The use of claim 1, wherein pinitol or chiroinositol is administered to the mammal in the form of a composition containing same, said composition being selected from the group consisting of: a pharmaceutical composition, a food composition and a beverage composition.
6. A use of an extract of a plant containing pinitol or chiroinositol for protecting the liver in a mammal.
7. The use of claim 6, wherein the plant extract containing pinitol or chiroinositol enhances superoxide dismutase (SOD) activity.
8. The use of claim 6, wherein the plant extract containing increases the glutathione level in the liver.
9. The use of claim 6, wherein the mammal is human.
10. The use of claim 6, wherein the plant is selected from the group consisted of soybean, pine, *Hovenia dulcis* Thunb, *Acanthopanax senticosus* and carob.
11. The use of claim 6, wherein the plant extract is a water extract or an organic solvent extract.
12. The use of claim 11, wherein the plant extract is prepared by

adding 5 to 15-fold volume of water to a plant powder; extracting at 10 to 80 °C for 1 to 24 hours; and filtering the extract thus obtained.

13. The use of claim 6, wherein the plant extract containing pinitol or chiroinositol is administered to the mammal in the form of a composition containing same, said composition being selected from the group consisting of: a pharmaceutical composition, a food composition and a beverage composition.

14. A method for preventing or treating a liver disease in a mammal, which comprises administering an effective amount of pinitol, chiroinositol or an extract of a plant containing pinitol or chiroinositol thereto.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the effective amount of pinitol or chiroinositol is 0.1 to 100 mg/kg body weight/day.